



LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MISSOURI

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HOT OFF THE PRESS – LWVUS POSITION ON IMMIGRATION

“After a lengthy and comprehensive study of this complex issue by our grassroots members,” said national League president Mary G. Wilson, “the League’s position calls for a path to citizenship for current unauthorized immigrants.”

“As part of overall immigration reform, the League supports a system for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status, including citizenship, by paying taxes, learning English, studying civics and meeting other relevant criteria,” Wilson stated. “We oppose deportations of current unauthorized immigrants who have no history of serious criminal activity,” she said.

The full immigration policy approved by the national League’s Board of Directors in March was studied by our membership for more than eighteen months. The policy achieved member consensus through a survey of the nearly 850 local Leagues. The full position is available on the LWVUS website.

Other elements of the League’s position include support for increased enforcement personnel at borders, more effective tracking of individuals who enter the U.S. and significant fines and penalties for employers who hire unauthorized workers. Furthermore, the League will champion due process for all persons, including the right to a fair hearing, right to counsel, right of appeal and right to humane treatment. The League position sets criteria for legal admission to the U.S., including family reunification of spouses or minor children; economic, business and employment needs in the U.S.; political persecution or humanitarian crises; and studying in the U.S.

The League will use this recently adopted position to guide its advocacy work on federal legislation introduced on this very important public policy issue. Now that League has an official position, LWVMO needs to be watching **SB 858**. It received final approval in the Missouri Senate this week, making numerous changes to state law relating to illegal immigrants. It calls for mandatory jailing of people whose identities cannot be immediately established, bars cities from creating “sanctuaries” for illegal immigrants, and prohibits certain illegal immigrants from attending public universities. This bears watching as it moves to the Missouri House.

ENERGY/GLOBAL WARMING – Win Colwill

The bills that offered incentives for green buildings have currently stalled; those pertaining to renewable fuels and vehicles are moving.

HCS HB 1326 (Sater), tax deduction for hybrid vehicles, passed the House 3/31. Any taxpayer who purchases a qualified hybrid vehicle manufactured in the U.S. on or after Jan. 1, 2008 could take a state tax deduction of \$2000 or 10% of the purchase price, whichever is less. The act automatically sunsets in 2014. Fiscal note: less than \$100,000/yr. for 2009 and 2010.

ENERGY/GLOBAL WARMING – Win Colwill (continued from page 1)

SCS SB 759 (Stouffer), biodiesel fuel mandate, passed the Senate 3/27. After June 1, 2010, when the price of retail biodiesel fuel is less or equal to conventional biodiesel, all diesel sold in Missouri shall contain at least 5% biodiesel. The act removes the air quality criteria, thereby allowing the Governor to issue an Executive Order to waive the current fuel ethanol or the act's biodiesel air quality requirements for any reason. Referred to the House Transportation Committee. LWVMO is currently seeking more information from the MO Air Quality Control Program.

SCS SB 749 (Ridgeway) is on the Senate Perfection Calendar. The bill creates a tax credit for alternative fuel facilities, a \$1500 tax deduction for hybrid vehicles, and tax credits for purchase of biodiesel and E-85 gasoline. Fiscal note: 0 up to \$3 million dollars.

SCS SB 1261 (Bray) passed the Senate 4/2. Requires collaboration among certain state departments to secure grants established under the Energy Independence & Security Act of 2007 to help fund green jobs, production of renewable fuels, increasing energy efficiency of products, buildings and vehicles, and R&D of renewable technologies. Fiscal note: 0. **LWVMO Supports.**

CHIPPING AWAY AT SEPARATION OF POWERS?

HJR 41 was passed in the Missouri House on April 3. It would create a chilling effect on the ability of Missourians to bring lawsuits against local and state governments. It would deny courts their rightful role in protecting civil liberties and individual rights by removing remedies to existing constitutional rights afforded to all Missourians. This measure now moves to the Senate where, if passed, it would go to a vote of the people as a constitutional amendment. Missourians for Fair and Impartial Courts (which League has been working with to protect our current court system) is encouraging action to defeat this in the Senate to avoid a costly election fight to preserve rights of Missourians.

HEALTH/MENTAL HEALTH – Lael Von Holt

Do you wonder what has happened to “Insure Missouri,” the Governor’s plan to help the uninsured workers? **HB 2398** (Schaaf) may be the answer. **HB 2398** was introduced on March 11 and was heard in the Special Committee on Healthcare Transformation on April 3. This bill establishes the Insure Missouri Plan as part of a larger health bill that includes the Health Facilities Review Board and the MO HealthNet Oversight Committee. **HB 2398** addresses the employed but low income, uninsured group that increases at every count. In collaboration with the MO HealthNet Division of the Department of Social Services, uninsured workers would establish a health care home and benefit from affordable health insurance. Insure Missouri, while not universal coverage, is an attempt to accommodate a significant population in need—which League can support at this time.

Another bill advancing is **SB 858** (Rupp), which modifies the laws regarding illegal immigrants. This reflects federal law and identifies citizenship and legal residence as requirements for receiving public benefits. **SB 858** passed the Senate this week. A similar bill, **HCS HB 1626** (Emery) regarding health care for illegal immigrants, was noted in our last bulletin. League will follow and report progress on both of these bills and, now that our national position on Immigration is finalized, may soon have a position.

The Autism Spectrum Disorders have been highlighted both in the media and the legislative session. Bills include **SCS SB 768** (Rupp) establishing a Commission on Autism (on Senate calendar for third reading); **HB 2304** (Lampe) regarding assessment and public education for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (assigned to committee) and **HB 1886** (Scharnhorst) regarding the option of tax credits for education of special needs children, especially autistic children (on House calendar for perfection, laid over). **HB 1886**, known as Bryce’s Law after Rep. Scharnhorst’s grandson, and **HB 2304** reflect the ongoing controversy over public vs. private options for special needs education.

TIRED OF THOSE PHONE CALLS?

The Senate discussed **SB 840** (Engler), which adds cell phone, and fax numbers to the state's No-Call List. It also protects those on the No-Call List from automated phone calls often used during election cycles. Automated calls for conducting polls on candidates and issues before the voters are still allowed, though "robo-calls" must include a "paid for by" statement as part of the call. If you want this bill to be voted out of the Senate to the House, contact your senator.

DEATH PENALTY MORATORIUM AND STUDY

HB 1870 (Deeken) is now the bill we are supporting. It is similar to **HB 1614** but has bi-partisan support which gives it a better chance of moving. The moratorium and study is only for two years instead of three. It has been assigned to the Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee, a positive step, but time is running short. Contacts to the committee chair could help (Rep. Mark Bruns, Jefferson City).

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS . . .

Voucher legislation, **SB 993** was debated in the Senate this week for some time before the bill's sponsor pulled it from the floor. Whether called a "scholarship" or anything else, it amounts to a tax credit diverting state tax dollars from public schools to private or religious schools. There are even problems with this bill's attempt to help special needs students who might be excluded from some of the schools eligible to receive the funds. League supports public schools supported with public funds to serve all students and avoiding tax credits that erode support for needed state services such as education.

Passed by the Senate, sent to the House: **SB 711** (Gibbons) on property tax reform is now **SS SCS 711** in a House committee; **SB 1038** (Shields) repealing campaign finance limits will be heard 4/8 in Elections Committee in the House; **SB 762** (Wilson) expanding the definition of "bullying" in school districts' policies to include cyberbullying and electronic communications in House committee.

The House Special Committee on Student Achievement voted out **HCS/HB 2040 and 2430** on 4/2 which now includes the special education tax credit voucher and restricting political contributions by teachers. Although there are some good parts in the bill, it is now one which League opposes. The same committee voted **SB 1066** (Ridgeway) referred to as ABCTE out on 3/31, which lowers standards for certifying teachers and omits the improvements which were made in the bill in the Senate.

The Legislative Bulletin is edited by Nancy Copenhaver, LWVMO Leg. Chair and 1st V.P. Questions regarding this or previous bulletins should be directed to the League office at lwvmo@yahoo.com You may also call the League office, and your comments will be forwarded to her.